AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-18 (canceled).

Claim 19 (new): A method of preventing destructive joint disease associated with rheumatoid arthritis in an individual with an earlier stage of rheumatoid arthritis comprising:

orally administering about 50 I.U./kg to about 25,000 I.U./kg of IFN-α to said individual; and

immediately swallowing said IFN-α.

Claim 20 (new): The method of claim 19, wherein about 30,000 units of IFN-α is orally adminstered.

Claim 21 (new): The method of claim 19, wherein said interferon is administered every other day.

Claim 22 (new): The method of claim 19, wherein said interferon is human recombinant interferon.

Claim 23 (new): A method of reducing inflammation associated with rheumatoid arthritis in an individual with rheumatoid arthritis comprising:

orally administering about 50 I.U./kg to about 25,000 I.U./kg of IFN-α to said individual; and

immediately swallowing said IFN-α.

Claim 24 (new): The method of claim 23, wherein about 30,000 units of IFN-α is orally adminstered.

Claim 25 (new): The method of claim 23, wherein said interferon is administered every other day.

Claim 26 (new): The method of claim 23, wherein said interferon is human recombinant interferon.

Claim 27 (new): A method of reducing a level of an interleukin in an individual with rheumatoid arthritis, comprising:

orally administering about 50 I.U./kg to about 25,000 I.U./kg of IFN-α to said individual; and

immediately swallowing said IFN-α, said IFN-α decreasing the level of IL-1, IL-6, IL-8, or a combination thereof in said individual.

Claim 28 (new): The method of claim 27, wherein about 30,000 units of IFN-α is orally adminstered.

Claim 29 (new): The method of claim 27, wherein said interferon is administered every other day.

Claim 30 (new): The method of claim 27, wherein said interferon is human recombinant interferon.